

**Human Rights Commission Meeting**  
**December 20 2012, 7-9pm, Bangs Community Center**

Present: Reynolds Winslow, Kathleen Anderson, Liam Brodigan, Lois Raj, Carol Ross, Ingrid Askew

Absent: Emily Jung, Gregory Bascomb

Others: Deborah Radway, Leslie Saulsberry

Meeting called to order by Chairman Reynolds Winslow at 7:03pm

A Moment of silence for those who gave their lives, or whose lives were taken in Newtown

1. Introduction of New Commissioners:

Introduction of and welcome to new members Carol Ross and Ingrid Askew who introduced themselves and provided some background information on their experience and interest.

2. Agenda Review and Additions: Request to put the Human Rights Blog on the town website with other blogs. *(Editor's note: October minutes stated need to improve the appearance of the blog before we advertise its existence; has this happened and is this still accurate?)*

3. Minutes for November meeting are with Emily Jung. Still Pending.

4. Student Commissioner Report-no meeting of student members since last meeting.

5. Coordinator's Report (Leslie Saulsberry): Lots going on, working with various departments on how they are managing their interactions with the community-helping them to see needs and fine tune how they can address those needs; for example, working with inspectors on how to address language barriers by helping them to get information out to the community in advance of inspections; acting on a recommendation for hosting an Open House at Town Hall; assisting the Police Department to develop and sustain healthy relationships with community groups-setting up social engagement opportunities for police officers.

Also received one citizen complaint from a woman who asked the Town Clerk's office to notarize a witnessing of a Mississippi absentee ballot being cast. Woman was not entirely clear up front to Clerk's office on her need and was not observed voting with the ballot in question, and it was sealed in an envelope before such witnessing could occur. Town Clerk's office could not notarize the document and voter was upset. The coordinator was asked to forward the Commission the submitted email from both parties involved.

6. Director's Report (Deborah Radway) December 10 Universal Declaration of Human Rights Vigil was a success, with 15-17 people gathered on the common for a community reading.

January 1<sup>st</sup> 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation event is set for 2pm on the Common, with bell ringing, reading of the Select Board's proclamation.

MLK Commemorative Breakfast is on Saturday Jan 19 at 8:30am at Middle School. Follow-up vigil on Monday, January 21 on Town Hall steps at noon will feature Michelle Brooks-Thompson, vocalist.

7. New Business:

Retreat-a time for Commission to get to know each other better, to plan work, and make commitment to a schedule. To be held on a Saturday at the Senior Center. Options of March 16, 23 or 30 discussed. Russ Vernon-Jones has been approached to moderate, will need to check dates with him.

8. Black History Month Event-Carol Ross and Ingrid Askew led with ideas to expand the activities of the Commission to include a major event to Paint the Town for Black History Month, to put Amherst on the map nationwide. Commission would collaborate with school children and business community to decorate windows of downtown businesses with representatives of the Diaspora. LSSE would be asked to be involved. Subcommittee of Carol, Ingrid and Kathleen has been working on the proposal.  
Suggestion to do outreach to Stavros and the Veterans Community to involve them with event.  
Suggestion to involve Amherst Media and Video Vanguards as well.
  9. Other suggestions to get the Commission and the Community more involved in Human Rights are a quarterly film series; a human rights ad campaign, street video blogs on the website, a more active web presence, the 2013 Human Rights Day Celebration and a logo design contest. Lots of new positive energy!
  10. Announcements: Chairman Winslow announced he had sent a letter of resignation from the Human Rights Commission to Debra Roussel, effective December 21, 2012. He has moved out of Town. Silence filled the room followed by inquiries and discussion of the struggle for Amherst to provide a community for African Americans.
  11. Annual holiday potluck followed.
- Meeting Adjourned 8:50pm  
Deborah Radway, notetaker